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# Department of State TELEGRAM

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Szpakowski DATE 12/23/81
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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6072

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

SUBJECT: GENERAL THIEU'S ADDRESS TO ELECTION OBSERVERS

GENERAL THIEU DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS TO ELECTION OBSERVERS WHEN THEY CALLED ON HIM AND PRIME MINISTER KY AT 11:30 A.M. TODAY, SEPT.
2, SAIGON TIME. KY DID NOT ADDRESS THE GROUP.
QUOTE GENTLEMEN, IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE FOR ME TO WELCOME YOU TO VIETNAM ON THE OCCASION OF OUR NATIONAL ELECTIONS. FOR THEVIETNAMESE PEOPLE, AS WELLAS FOR THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM IN VIETNAM, THESE ELECTIONS ARE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE. THEY WILL PROVIDE THE REPUBLIC

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OF VIET-NAM A GOVERNMENT CHOSEN BY THE PEOPLE TO WORK FOR THE PEOPLE AND TO LEAD THEM IN THIS CRUCIAL PHASE OF THIS STRUGGLE WHICH WILL DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF VIET-NAM FOR MANY GENERATIONS TO COME.
AN ELECTED GOVERNMENT WITH A CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS AND A POPULAR MANDATE WILL HAVE THE NEEDED PRESTIGE AND AUTHORITY IN FACING THE NUMEROUS INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PROBLEMS WHICH CONFRONT OUR COUNTRY

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AT THIS TIME.
THAT IS WHY, WHEN IN JUNE 1965 A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT IN THE FACE OF MOUNTING UNREST ASKED THE ARMED FORCES TO ASSUME THE DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY, A MAJOR PREOCCUPATION OF THE NATIONAL LEADE
RSHIP
COMMITTEE, HAS BEEN TO BUILD THE BASES FOR A SOLID AND DURABLE DEMOCRACY.
TO THAT END, WE ORGANIZED LAST YEAR THE ELECTIONS FOR A CONSTITUENT
ASSEMBLY ENTRUSTED WITH THE TASK OF ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL CONSTITUTION FOR THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM. ALL THE OBSERVERS AGREED THAT THESE ELECTIONS WERE VERY FAIR AND HONEST. BESIDES, THE VOTERS TURNED OUT IN LARGE NUMBERS TO VOTE, ATTESTING THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE POPULATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BUILDING OF DEMOCRACY.

AS A PROCEDURE TO ENDOW THIS COUNTRY WITH A NEW CONSTITUTION, MAY I POINT OUT THAT THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE COULD HAVE DRAFTED THE TEXT OF THE CONSTITUTION, AND SUBMITTED IT TO A PLEBISCITE, AS HAS BEEN DONE IN A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

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IN THIS PROCEDURE, THE FINAL DECISION STILL BELONG TO THE PEOPLE, BUT THE GOVERNMENT IN POWER COULD HAVE THE MAJOR ROLE IN THE ELABORATION OF THE CONSTITUTION. BUT WE PREFERRED TO LEAVE IT ENTIRELY IN THE HANDS OF THE REPRESENTATIVES CHOSEN BY THE PEOPLE, THOUGH THE ELECTIONS OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.
THE
CONSTITUTION WAS PROMULGATED BY THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE ON APRIL 1STN IMMEDIATELY AFTER IT HAD BEEN ADOPTED BY THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, ALTHOUGH THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE HAS THE RIGHT TO VETO ANY CLAUSES WHICH IT DISAPPROVES,
AND SUCH A VETO
COULD BE OVERRULEDONLY BY A SECOND VOTE AT A SPECIAL MAJORITY OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, WE HAVE ALREADY ORGANIZED THROUGHOUT THE NATION LOCAL ELECTIONS IN WHICH THE PEOPLE IN THE VILLAGES AND HAMLETS BY THEIR VOTES CHOSE THE MEMBERS OF THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCILS,

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THUS ESTABLISHING THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR DEMOCRACY AT GRASS ROOTS LEVEL.

THE PRESIDENTIAL AND SENATORIAL ELECTIONS WHICH YOU WILL WITNESS TOMORROW, WILL BE THE CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT OF THIS ARDUOUS PROCESS OF DMOCRACY BUILDING, WHICH WAS BEGUN MORE THAN ONE YEAR AGO. NEXT MONTH, THE PEOPLE WILL AGAIN GO TO THE POLLS TO ELECT MEMBERS

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OF THE LOWER HOUSE, COMPLETING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT BY POPULAR CHOICE.

TO BE MEANIGFUL, IT IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE THAT THESE ELECTION WILL BE FAIR, HONEST AND FREE. WE HAVE DONE OUR BEST TO INSURE THAT THEY WILL BE SO.

ON THIS IMPORTANT OCCASION, WE ARE PRIVILEGED TO HAVE YOU, AS DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF DELEGATION FROM MANY COUNTRIES TO WITNESS THE REBIRTH OF OURREPUBLIC THROUGH THE FREELY EXPRESSED WILL OF OUR PEOPLE.

ALL AVAILABLE FACILITIES WILL BE RESERVED TO YOU, TO GO ANYWHERE AT ANY TIME OF YOUR CHOICE DURING THE ELECTIONS, TO HAVE A DIRECT, FIRST HAND, AND THOROUGH OBSERVATION OF OUR ELECTIONS.

YOUWILL SEE FOR YOURSELVES HOW WE STRIVE TO BUILD DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDST OF A WAR. THE VIET-CONG BOASTED THAT THEY CONTROL A LARGE SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION, AND YET, IN SPITE OF COMMUNIST THREATS, INTIMIDATION, AND BRUTAL ACTS OF TERRORISM, AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION TURNED OUT TO VOTE AT THE ELECTIONS FOR THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY LAST YEAR, AND AT THE LOCAL ELECTIONS IN THE VILLAGES AND HAMLETS EARLIER THIS YEAR. WE EXPECT A COMPARABLE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE

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NATIONAL ELECTIONS TOMORROW, IN SPITE OF COMMUNIST THREATS AND ACTS OF TERRORISM.

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DURING THE PRESENT ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS, EVERYONE COULD SEE THAT THERE IS A COMPLETE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, AND COMPLETE FREEDOM FOR THE PRESS TO REPORT THOROUGHLY THE STATEMENTS AND SOMETIMES HARSH CRITICISMS MADE BY THE CANDIDATES AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. THE PRESS ARE ALSO ENTIRELY FREE TO COMMENT ON THE RESPECTIVE MERITS, OR LACK OF THEM, AMONG THE VARIOUS CANDIDATES. THAT IS ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL FEATURES WHICH DISTINGUISH OUR CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY FROM THE TOTALITARIAN SOCIETY WHICH THE COMMUNISTS ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE ON US BY THE FORCE OF ARMS AND BY TERRORISM, WHILE THEY ARE TALKING OF LIBERATING US.

IN COMMUNIST NORTH VIET-NAM, IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT ANYONE COULD PUBLICLY AND SAFELY CRITICIZE THE COMMUNIST REGIME. FREEDOM OF SPEECH, FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION, AND FREEDOM OF THE PRESS ARE RUTHLESSLY REPRESSED IN THE NORTH, AND NO GENUINE LEGAL OPPOSITION IS ALLOWED BY THE HANOI REGIME. THAT IS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT WHICH THE CRITICS OF OUR STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN VIET-NAM SEEM OFTEN TO OVERLOOK.

SOME FOREIGN CRITICS CLAIM THAT THE PRESENT WAR ORIGINATES FROM OUR REFUSAL TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMON ELECTIONS WITH COMMUNIST NORTH VIET-NAM FOR REUNIFICATION, BUT MEANINGFUL ELECTIONS SUPPOSE A

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MINIMUM OF FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, WHICH AT THIS TIME ARE TOTALLY SUPPRESSED IN COMMUNIST NORTH VIET-NAM.

THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE AND THE WAR CABINET ARE PROUD TO HAVE RESTORED POLITICAL STABILITY TO THIS NATION IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, AND TO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE BUILDING OF DEMOCRACY IN THE REUBLIC OF VIET-NAM. (MORE)
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6073

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TOMORROW'S ELECTIONS WILL BE A SIGNIFICANT STEP IN OUR LONG JOURNEY TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOLID DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. WHILE DEMOCRACY IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CONCEPT OF SOCIETY, IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE THE CONSENT AND THE PARTICIPATION OF THE GOVERNED, ITS ACHIEVEMENT IS PAINFUL AND ARDUOUS BECAUSE IT REQUIRES FROM EACH CITIZEN A HIGH SENSE OF CONSTRUCTIVE COOPERATION AND SELF-DISCIPLINE. THE PROBLEM IS THE MORE DIFFICULT WHEN THIS PROCESS IS UNDERTAKEN IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY, WHICH IS FACING A RUTHLESS WAR FOR SURVIVAL.

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WE THEREFORE NOURISH NO ILLUSION THAT A CONSTITUTION AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS BY THEMSELVES WOULD SOLVE ALL OUR POLITICAL PROBLEMS, AS BY A MAGIC WAND. BUT WE ARE PLEDGED TO MAKE ALL OUR EFFORTS TO BRING THE GOAL OF A TRUE AND MEANINGFUL DEMOCRACY NEARER TO VIET-NAM EVERY DAY, BECAUSE IN FINAL ANALYSIS THIS ULTIMATE GOAL IS THE RAISO D'ETRE OF OUR PRESENT SACRIFICES IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST COMMUNIST TYRANNY.
AS CANDIDATES IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, OUR HOPE IS SIMPLY TO BE IN A POSITION TO CONTINUE THE UNDERTAKINGS WHICH WE HAVE

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ONLY BEGUN IN THE LAST TWO YEARS. WE ARE, HOWEVER, READY TO COMPLY WITH THE VERDICT OF THE PEOPLE, NO MATTER WHAT IT WILL BE.

AS SOLDIERS WHO HAVE DEDICATED THEIR LIFE TO THE SERVICE OF THIS COUNTRY, WE SHALL BE HAPPY AND PROUD TO SERVE IN ANY POSITION IN WHICH WE CAN BE USEFUL TO THIS NATION IN ITS STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM. ON THE EVE OF THE GREAT DAY ON WHICH THE SOVEREIGN PEOPLE OF VIETNAM WILL MAKE THEIR DECISIONS FOR THE FUTURE, LET ME TELL YOU HOW HAPPY I AM TO HAVE YOU IN OUR MIDST, AS DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVES FROM CNC

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